13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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its old habits, as is illustrated by the persistence of cremation rites from the earliest megalithic phase to the end of the Bronze Age, almost on the threshold of the Christian era.

At some stage towards the close of the Bronze Age the expanding Celtic culture, carried with the sword across western Europe, was able to gain a foothold in the north-east, whence in time it imposed itself and its language on the whole of Ireland and later, by way of Argyll, on Scotland too. But the price of this conquest was the loss of many elements of Celtic culture or their adaptation to the Irish environment and to long-established native tradition. The art of the Celtic overlords, for example, quickly develops forms and features which are insular and distinctively Irish. In other words there is more continuity of folk ways throughout the prehistoric period in Ireland than in Britain. And this Irish-Celtic civilization of the Early Iron Age was able, during the following period, to maintain itself through the centuries when the Roman Empire embraced nearly all western Europe. The spirit of its art and life was almost untouched by the mass-production and standardization of imperial Rome. It survived long enough to be caught up and revitalized in the late Celtic phase by the fervour of a Christian faith whose adaptation to Celtic tradition is illustrated in Saint Columba's famous phrase: 'Christ is my druid'. It was a time of great missionary enterprise, but at home its greatest achievement was the taming of the damp lowland forests which earlier peoples had shunned. Legendary history, now receiving confirmation from archaeological research, tells of technological advances and increasing population and settlement from about the seventh century onwards.

Irish Christianity grew up within the forms of Irish life: the church claimed no martyrs and there is little evidence of conflict with older beliefs, which clearly were absorbed. The Celtic church was peculiar in that the centres of its life were the great monasteries: there were no cities to form the seats of powerful bishops. Instead, the founders' kin retained the ownership of the monasteries, and the Celtic tradition survived in administration as in art and architecture. It was only after the ravages of the Vikings and the reassertion of pagan cults that the Irish Church was reformed by Saint Malachy, who established

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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175 a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh
●[795] to the primacy in the eleventh century.

But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities
175 of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—
162 and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been
311 exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition
361 has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was
175 certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

193 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [776] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

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> Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

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Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

> Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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*831 155 175 178 181 779 795 798 [785] enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theologians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 155 178 181 779 798 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of [874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

> Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161–162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

> Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better if God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent co-

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beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

> The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-